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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE/UK/FRANCE: SANCTIONS AND LEADING IN THE EU

REF: LONDON 937

Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C/NF) At a April 21 meeting in Paris (reftel), French Deputy National Security Advisor Bruno Joubert, MFA Spokesperson Eric Chevallier, and FM Kouchner's African Affairs Advisor Charlotte Montel all "pressed hard" on UK Foreign Office Minister for Africa Lord Malloch-Brown to support lifting EU sanctions on Zimbabwe, UK Cabinet Office Senior Africa Advisor Anna French (strictly protect throughout), who attended the meeting, told poloff April 24. According to French, Montel said that the EU will begin considering lifting sanctions "with or without the UK," but would prefer the UK to lead the process. Malloch-Brown replied by saying, "Yes, it was time to begin looking at Zimbabwe as a glass half-full," but that the Zimbabwe GNU had not done enough yet to merit lifting sanctions. Malloch-Brown affirmed to his French hosts that the UK will lead EU discussions on Zimbabwe.

¶2. (C/NF) Indicating that many senior UK Government figures remain hard-line on Zimbabwe, French said UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown had recently told Italian Prime Minister Prodi that the UK "will not support the (Government of Zimbabwe) until Mugabe is gone." French said Ministers will consider next steps on Zimbabwe at a Cabinet Africa Sub-Committee meeting on May 6.

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